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Slaughter Introduces Bill to Enhance Athletic Opportunities for Girls

Bill Will Help Monitor Success of High School Sports Programs for Girls

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY), Chairwoman of the House Rules Committee, today introduced a bill designed to help high schools improve athletic opportunities for girls and encourage greater participation in sports for all students. The High School Athletics Accountability Act will require that high schools report basic data on the number of female and male students in their athletic programs as well as the expenditures made for their sports teams.

“**Better information about girls' participation in sports will help high schools and parents to improve fairness and increase athletic opportunities for all students,**” said Rep. Slaughter. “**Title IX has worked wonders. The number of women and girls participating in sports has increased exponentially**, but there's still much more work to do.”

Rep. Slaughter chose to introduce the bill today, February 7th, on the occasion of the twenty-first annual National Girls and Women in Sports Day.

“Girls who participate in sports are healthier, more confident, receive higher grades, and have access to more opportunities than non-athletes,” Rep. Slaughter continued. **“We need more information about high school athletic programs to ensure that they are providing female students equal opportunities to play sports.”**

Background:

The High School Athletics and Accountability Act

- **Provisions of the High School Athletics Accountability Act** - Under the bill, high schools must report the following information about the athletic opportunities available to students:

- Number of students attending the school
- Number of male and female students participating in sports
- Number of boys' and girls' sports teams
- Budget and expenditures for all sports teams
- Detailed information about trainers, coaches, and other athletic personnel, including numbers, salaries, and levels of experience

- **Consistent with Existing Law** - The bill is consistent with the No Child Left Behind Act, in that it requires schools to collect and report data that helps make them accountable to national standards.

Facts About Girls' Participation in High School Sports

- Female students receive 1.25 million fewer opportunities to play high school sports than do male students, which converts to many lost prospects for athletic scholarships. [NFHS Survey, September 2006]

- Adolescent females are twice as likely to suffer from depression; and studies have proven time and again that athletic females have higher confidence, better self-images and lower-levels of depression. [Women's Sports Foundation Health Risks and the Teen Athlete, March 2001]

- 80 percent of women identified as key leaders in Fortune 500 companies participated in sports, as did executive business women. (National Survey Game Face - From Locker Room to Boardroom: Survey on Sports in the Lives of Women Business Executives, February 2002.)

Benefits of the High School Athletics Accountability Act

- **Fighting obesity** - A recent survey on childhood obesity found that 30 percent of children ages 6-19 are either obese or at risk of being so. Of these, 82 percent cited lack of physical activity as a contributing factor. These statistics serve to show the growing need for athletics among today's youth. (Kaiser Family Foundation and San Jose Mercury News, "Survey on Childhood Obesity," March 2004.)

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